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*Obedience due to the HIGHER-
POWERS by the Laws of
GOD and this NATION.*

A
SERMON
Preach'd upon the
REBELLION,

And now publish'd for the Use of those, who
are oblig'd to take the OATHS of

Allegiance and Abjuration.

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*Let every Soul be subject to the
Higher Powers.*

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jects must not only know it is their Duty to Obey, but must be also taught whom they are to Obey, who those Persons are, that demand their Submission and Obedience. This, I say, must be made as plain to them as the other; and unless it is so plain and evident, that all Persons of what Degree or Quality soever may be fully satisfied, who are the proper Objects of their Obedience: It may happen that our Obedience may be often misplac'd; we may sometimes Obey whom we ought to Resist; and at others, Resist those whom we are obliged by the Laws of God and Man to Obey.

The Persons then that are to be Obeyed in the several Nations of the World must be determined; and for this Reason I conclude, that God in those Scriptures, which relate to, and direct the Obedience of Subjects, (seeing he hath given no Command in vain) hath sufficiently declared to whom that Obedience is due: For all the Divine Commands of that kind will be otherwise very imperfect; and Men left under the greatest Doubts and Difficulties in this most necessary Duty. Which being premised, I shall now endeavour, by God's Assistance,

I. First, *To explain this general Rule, Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers; and to give some Reasons to justify the Explication of it.*

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II. Secondly, *I shall consider how the Laws and Practice of this Nation are agreeable to, and supported by the Doctrine of it.*

III. Thirdly, *I shall apply what hath been said, and so, with some Motives perswading Men to Obey and be Subject to the present Government, conclude,*

I. *First*, I am to explain the Command before us. And here I think it is very easie to observe, that Subjection is not only imposed and commanded, but also that the Objects of it are assigned and determined: And if there is any Difficulty in these plain Words, the greatest must be to understand, what those Powers are which are called the *Higher Powers*.

Now that there are such *Powers* that are to be obeyed and submitted to, in every settled Government under Heaven, I believe is not to be disputed. But by these I do not understand every bold Usurper, that by the overbearing Power of some prevailing Faction shall attempt to thrust himself into the Government of a Kingdom: But one, who, by absolute Conquest, is settled in, or by the general submission of any People, is intrusted with the Supreme Authority over them. And that Governments so settled are not to be disturbed; that such Powers ought to be submitted to, seems to me very clear from the following

following Considerations. *First*, Because I cannot conceive how any other, with any Propriety of Speech, can be called the *Higher Powers*: And *Secondly*, because the Words, being understood in this plain and obvious Sense, are a plain obvious Rule to all Persons whatsoever. No one can be so ignorant as not to know who is the Governour of that Kingdom wherein he lives, what the Powers are that make the Laws, and who has the Execution of them: And when he knows this, he immediately knows whom he is to Obey. He need not be any great Master of Distinctions, nor be well read (as few Persons are or can be) in the History and Laws of his Country: Knowing who has the Sovereignty over him, he may be his own Casuist in this Matter: His Duty is plain before him, and he has nothing else to do, but to be faithful in the Execution of it.

And so if the following parallel Texts of Scripture were understood in their plain, easie and natural Sense, the Subject would be still better instructed, and more confirm'd in his Duty. St. Peter commands us to *Submit our selves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lords sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme*; and St. Paul directs Titus to *put Men in mind to be subject to Principalities, and Powers, and obey Magistrates*; and gives this general Exhortation to Timothy; *I exhort that*
Supplica-

Supplications and Prayers be made for Kings, and all that are in Authority : These Texts, I say, will teach every one, that is not prejudiced with the subtil Interpretations of some unhappy Persons, whom he is to Obey and Submit to ; whom he is to pray for as King or Supreme Governour of his Country. And I think, it ought to be no Objection to this Interpretation of these Texts, that it makes the Duty of the Subject too plain and obvious : For, if the Rules of our Obedience were obscure and difficult, how would all Persons, that are concern'd in them, and for whose Direction and Instruction they were given, be capable of understanding them ?

Obedience is as much the Duty of the Ignorant as of the Learned, and the Disobedience of the Populacy may be often of very fatal Consequence to any Kingdom, or Nation. This Duty therefore, and who are the proper Objects of it, ought to lie level to the Capacities of the meanest Persons ; every one ought to know whom he is to Obey, that no one may pretend Ignorance in a Case, which is of such vast Importance to the Peace and Quiet of the World. And this every one may soon know, if the above-named Texts are to be taken in that natural and easie Sense, which I have given of them. Whereas, if all Subjects were obliged, not only to consider who are their *Higher Powers*, but who have
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the best Right to be so, and to the Government over them; the Subject's Duty would be sometimes full of Doubts and Difficulties; and altho' *Obedience* is due, and required from every individual Subject, yet none but Lawyers and Statesmen would be proper Judges of it; and not only the Peace and Welfare of Nations, but the Salvation of our Souls, must in some Measure depend upon their Determinations.

The second Reason, that perswades me to believe, that by the *Higher Powers*, no other are intended by the Apostle, than those that are settled in the actual Possession of the Government, is, because our Saviour seems to make no farther enquiry when the *Pharisees* and *Herodians* came to him to know whether it were lawful to give Tribute unto *Cæsar* or not? For in that Case, without enquiring by what Title *Cæsar* came to be Governor of *Judea*, He bids them *bring unto him a Penny*: And when they had told him that it was *Cæsar's Image and Superscription*, and by that Answer confessed his being in Possession of the Government, He says, *Render unto Cæsar the Things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the Things that are God's*. From whence it is plain that something was to be rendered to *Cæsar* that was *Cæsar's*; but seeing nothing, no Tribute could be due to *Cæsar* from the *Jews*, if they were not to submit

mit to him as their Supreme Governour. This Answer of our Saviours, if there is any meaning in it, must signifie that it was their Duty so to do, And that however he became Governour of *Judea*, they were now to acquiesce in his Government over them. And thus it seems they were bound to do, notwithstanding God had given it as a Fundamental Law to that Nation, That *One from among thy Brethren shalt thou set King over thee; thou mayest not set a Stranger over thee, which is not thy Brother.* So that according to this Command, there was not a *Jeru* but had a better Title to be Governour of *Judea* than *Cesar*. But yet you see, when the *Jeru* being sensible of this, seem to have put in their Claim for the Government, as belonging even by Divine Right, to one of their own Nation: Our blessed Lord was so far from unsettling the Governments of the World, that he wayes all these Considerations, and in effect bids them be subject to those *Higher Powers*, which, whether by their own Fault, or, for the Punishment of their Sins, had then the Rule and Dominion over them. And if we consider that such Determinations of this Case are more agreeable to the Wisdom and Mercy of God, this will be a Third Reason to establish the Doctrine I have hitherto insisted on. For certainly those Interpretations of God's Laws must be truest,

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that discover the greatest Wisdom and Mercy in them : Let us consider then what might be the Effects of obeying my Text in the Sense that I have now given of it. What if the whole World were agreed to be for ever faithful to those Princes, that are now settled in the respective Governments of it? Some Kings and Nations may perhaps, in times past, have suffered by not observing this Rule; but certainly obeying the present Governments must establish the present Peace of the World : And as long as Men will continue to Obey the *Powers* that are, or shall be, so long will the Kingdoms and Nations of the Earth be freed from those intestine Commotions, that are most fatal and destructive to Communities. In short, nothing has been of more dismal Consequence, than the disputing the Rights of Princes; but it being once determin'd, that *all Persons* must in *all Governments* Obey those that are establish'd in the Sovereignty over them; this would put an end to all Disputes of this Nature; when a Government was once settled, it would so continue, and never be disturbed again by Civil Wars and Tumults, till Men had forgot this most Wise and Divine Law, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.* The Mercy of which, in the Sense that I have now, given of it, will be a farther Vindication of this Interpretation. For if God hath com-
manded

manded all Nations to be subject to those Powers that are in possession of, and intrusted with the Government of them; then all those dreadful Ills may be prevented, that might happen to any People, by endeavouring to recover the Government out of the Hands of those that are in full Possession of it. And it is not to be expected, but that these should be very fatal and destructive. The wresting the Scepter out of one Hand, and placing it in another, is not so light a Matter, as some Men may vainly and rashly imagine it; the struggle, in all human probability must not only be attended with a vast deal of Bloodshed, and the Ruin and Destruction of many Families; but, for that dreadful Interval, all Government must, in some Parts of that unhappy Nation, be dissolv'd; the Laws of Justice and Humanity laid aside; one part of the Country ravaged and plundered by the other; whilst Virtue, Religion, good Manners, and every thing that is sacred, suffer in the Quarrel.

These, and far more dreadful Consequences, must be expected from all Attempts of this Nature. And Subjects, whilst they might perhaps enjoy their Liberties and Religion in Peace and Quietness under their present Governours, obliged to bring themselves and their Country into the most dismal Circumstances, as often as any other Person, that

may seem to have a better Right, shall put in his Claim for it. God indeed might have required this at our Hands; He might have obliged all Nations and Kingdoms to have sacrificed the Lives of ten Thousand of their People, and every thing that is dear to them, to the Interest of one Person, and to have submitted to no Powers but those, who according to the particular Laws of their Country, they were convinc'd, had the best Right to Govern them. But sure I am, there is no express Text of Scripture, that imposes these severe Duties upon us: And seeing Government was not instituted for the aggrandizing some few particular Persons in the World, but for the Use and Benefit of Mankind, and God hath so often declared, that he requires Mercy and not Sacrifice; we ought to interpret all those Scriptures relating to the Government of the World in that Sense and Meaning which makes most for the Peace and Quiet of it. And if Men would but give themselves time to read, and consider, what have been the dismal Effects, in this and other Nations, of unsettling and breaking in upon the Governments of them for the sake of those who have been thought to have the best Title to the Crown; they will believe that no Law could be fuller of Mercy to Mankind in general, than that which permits, nay obliges People to submit to their present Governours.

ours. And this is a third Reason that inclines me to believe that this is the true intent and meaning of the Words before us. And, of the Sense that I have given of them hath appeared to be neither forced nor intricate, but plain, natural, and of general Use and Direction, agreeable to our Saviour's Determination in the Case of paying Tribute unto *Cæsar*, and demonstrates this Law to be full of Wisdom and Mercy, answering all the ends of Government: I hope, what hath been insisted on, concerning our Obedience to the Powers that are, will not be esteem'd any new Doctrine, or unworthy of the most faithful Subject. Had it been for ever observ'd, it had for ever secur'd Kings and Princes, and their Heirs after them, in Possession of their Kingdoms: And if it be observ'd for the Future, it will, more effectually, than any other Rule can do, provide for the Peace of the World, and maintain the Government of it. And so I shall consider under my

II. *Second Head, How far the Practice and Laws of this Kingdom have been agreeable to, and are supported by, this Doctrine.* And,

I. *First*, It must be acknowledg'd by all Persons, that are in any Degree acquainted with our *English History*, that, notwithstanding the Crown from the very beginning of
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Kingly Government among us, has been esteem'd Hereditary; yet whenever any Person have got into the Possession of the Throne, the constant Practice of this Nation has been, to submit to them as Kings; whatever was their Title to the Crown, they were enroll'd amongst the Kings of this Realm, were acknowledg'd both at home and abroad; and their Treaties with foreign Princes, esteem'd as Sacred, and their Laws to be of equal Authority with those that were enacted by any of our Hereditary Kings. This, I say, has been the constant Practice of the People of this Nation; and I think it is thereby fully declared, what were their Opinions in Matters of Government. That tho' it ever was the desire of this People, that the Crown should descend to the next Heir; yet they thought that the *Higher Powers*, in this, and all other Nations, ought to be submitted to, and obeyed: And therefore, notwithstanding any private Laws of this Kingdom, determining the Succession of the Crown, they always conformed themselves to this General and Apostolical Rule, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.*

And I think it is not to be doubted, but that very Ancient Maxim, pleaded by all our Judges above 200 Years since, as a known stated Rule in Government, [viz. *The Crown takes away all Stops and Defects in Blood*]

was

was built upon the same Principles. That it was not owing, as some may imagine, to the Corruption and Flattery of Courtiers and Statesmen, but was indeed declarative of that great and Religious Regard which our Forefathers had for their *Higher Powers*; that they acknowledged the Sacredness of the Kingly Office in this Nation, by confessing the Crown, that Ensign of it, demanded their obedience without any Exceptions to the Title of him that possessed it.

And as this Maxim, and the Practice of past Ages shew, what were the Sentiments of the ancient Inhabitants of this Nation; so they have more fully declared it by express Acts of Parliament. For in the 11th Year of Henry the VIIth, there was an Act made, That not only provides for the general Security of those that should therefore serve their Prince and Sovereign for the Time being, against any *Rebellion, Power or Might* whatsoever; but also calls this their *True Duty of Allegiance*. The Spirit of which Law, my Lord Chief Justice *Bacon* says, was certainly Pious and Noble; And, if we will take the Opinion of my Lord *Clarendon*; who acknowledged the same to be in full force in his Time; of King *Charles* the First; who, referring to the Consideration of the People of England, says, that his good Subjects may read with Comfort; or, after these, of my Lord
Keeper

Keeper *Bridgeman*; who confesses the Equity of the same Statute, at the Tryal of the *Regicides*; it must be confessed, that this Act was not repealed in the Reign of King *James* the First, as is pretended by some Persons in the Case before us.

And then what can the meaning of this be? Or why should these Great Men famous in their Generations, and who liv'd in the Reigns of those who had the most undoubted Titles to the Crown? Nay, why should the Blessed Martyr himself, so much approve of a Law, encouraging Persons to fight for the King in Possession, against any Might whatsoever? Unless they thought it most agreeable to the Directions of Holy Scripture and the very ends of Government, that all Princes, entrusted with the Execution of it should be obeyed and supported without any Reserve whatsoever.

And that the same Doctrine obtain'd in this Kingdom, long before the Reign of *Henry* the VIIth is plain, because the Treason mentioned in the Statute of Treason, made in the 25th Year of *Edward* the IIIrd, can be committed only against the King in Possession, appears from the Opinions of Sir *Edward Cook*, and Lord Chief Justice *Hale*. And it is most certain, that no other Person could be intended in that Statute; because the Age when that Act was made, never knew any other

other King than the Prince on the Throne, and no succeeding Parliaments have made any other Interpretations of it.

Resistance then, of the King in Possession, is High Treason, according to the ancient Statute Law of this Kingdom.

And now if we consider, on the one Hand, those Laws, by which the Imperial Crown of this Realm is made Hereditary; and on the other hand, those that direct our Obedience to *All Kings* whatsoever, when they are in Possession of the Throne; it must be allowed (altho' it was the first Intention of our Legislators, that the Crown should descend to the next Heir; yet considering the Revolutions and Changes, this and all other States and Kingdoms are subject to) they have made farther Provision for the Government of it, and have cut off all Pretences to Rebellion, by obliging all Persons, under the Pain of High-Treason, not to resist the Regal Power, whosoever is invaded with it. And by so doing, they have done all that any Human Authority could do, for the Peace and Good Government of the People; prevented, as much as in them lay, by making the Crown Hereditary, the fatal Consequences of an Elective Monarchy; tho' they have not taken upon them to declare, That no other Persons should be Obeyed in this Kingdom, but those that come to the Crown according to the Hereditary Settlements of it.

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Nations may settle what Forms of Government they please, and make Laws directing what Person or Persons shall have the Administration of it: But no Laws must be enacted, that may in any publick Case whatsoever be destructive of all Government. Such Laws would be in themselves void, and no Nation on Earth would be obliged to submit to them.

Government must be preserved in the World. But could this always be, was the Obedience of the Subject so inseparably tyed to One Family, and to One particular Person in it, that as often as the Right Heir was dispossest of the Throne, there must be then no King in *Israel*; no One to execute or enact Laws; no One to punish Vice and reward Virtue; till the Sovereign Power (which perhaps might never be) was restored to Him that had the best Right to it? This certainly could never be the Intention of any Legislature: No One, that had the Good of any Nation at Heart, would render the Government of it so precarious; or make it a standing Law in any Kingdom, that all Government should cease, as often as the Right Heir was excluded from it. Neither would the Case be much better amongst us, if the Obedience of Subjects was so Discretionary, as some Persons imagine it to be under our Non-Hereditary King; seeing every Dissatisfaction would then run them into Rebellion, and fill the Nation with Blood and Ruin.

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And therefore we ought to accept it with all Thankfulness, that God hath provided better for the Peace of the World, that by One general Law, Superior to all National or Human Laws, he hath obliged all People and Languages, to obey the Powers that are settled in the Governments of the World: And the Wisdom of this Nation hath bound the same Duty upon us; declaring it (notwithstanding the Hereditary Succession of the Crown) to be our true Duty of Allegiance to serve the King for the time being; nay, that all Resistance against him is High Treason. And this shall suffice to shew, how far the Laws and Practice of this Kingdom have been agreeable to, and are supported by, the Doctrine of the Text, according to the plain and obvious meaning of it.

III. *I shall now, in the last Place, apply what hath been said upon this important Subject, and, with some Motives perswading Men to Obey, and be Subject to the present Government, conclude.* And,

I. Seeing both the Laws of God and this Nation do oblige us to Obey the *Higher Powers*, that are intrusted with it; it is very evident that our Obedience is due to His present Majesty King GEORGE. For as the Kingly or *Higher Powers* are now in Him, and Him

only ; as He, and no One else, is Supreme Governour of this Kingdom ; to resist Him, is to resist an Ordinance of God committed to Him, and to Rebel not only against our Modern Laws, but the ancient Statute Laws of this Kingdom. For as our Laws, Customs and Usages have determin'd the Succession of the Crown to the next Heir, so they have and do direct our Obedience to Him that is in Possession of it. The same Power that made this Kingdom Hereditary, hath also made it the Subject's Duty to Obey the King for the Time being. So that if the Laws of this Land ought to be as much regarded in one Case as in another, we ought to make as much Conscience of Obeying a Non-Hereditary, as an Hereditary King ; seeing the Legislative Power, which gives to the One a Right to the Crown, gives to the other a Right to our Obedience, when he is possessed of it.

And if it is our Duty to yield faithful and true Allegiance to King GEORGE, it is much more our Duty to Pray for Him, and the Success of His Arms. For, he that is to be Obeyed as King, is to be prayed for as King, according to St. Paul's Exhortation *I exhort, that Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men ; for Kings, and all that are in Authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.* For this

(says

(says he) *is good and acceptable in the sight of our Saviour*, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3.

Indeed, when we consider what Persons are suspected to be engag'd in this Fatal Rebellion ; that some of them are not only our Countrymen, but Men that have been themselves, and their Families before them, a Support and Ornament of this poor distracted Church and Nation ; one cannot so much as think of their Ruin and Overthrow without some Regret, and secret Grief for them. But such is the sad Necessity of all Civil Wars ; they oblige Men, not only to treat their Friends and Acquaintance, but sometimes their very Relations, as Enemies, and to turn their Arms and Prayers against them.

Lastly, That we may be better dispos'd to bear Faith and true Allegiance to our Sovereign Lord, Let us remember that the Person, who is the Cause of all this Distraction and Desolation in this Kingdom, stands excluded from all Right to the Government of it, by several express Acts of Parliament, made in the Reigns of King *William*, and our late *Most Gracious Queen*. That the Validity and Obligation of those Laws, are by some Persons disputed, is not to be denied. But if all other Laws, made in those Reigns, will be for ever binding to the Subject, till they are repeal'd in a Parliamentary way (as they must be according to this Constitution ;) why must
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not these, relating to the Succession of the Crown ? If King *William* and Queen *Anne* were indeed King and Queen of this Nation, then the force of their Laws, of what kind soever they are, must be own'd and acknowledged : And if they were not so in the Eye of the Law, why were we commanded to Obey them as such ? Why was it our Duty to serve them in their Wars ? Why was it High-Treason to resist them ? Nay, why, as being the *Higher Powers* in this Nation, did the Law of God enjoin our Subjection and Submission to them ? To have been bound to yield such a full and entire Obedience to a sort of Titular, half Kings, (a Distinction not to be found in our Laws, or History) to Persons that could not answer the Necessities of Government, by making any Alteration in the Settlement of the Crown, upon the greatest Emergencies, had been a Hardship and Imposition too great to be suspected in this Constitution.

So that in short, all the Arguments that I have hitherto insisted on, to prove that the Law of this Land doth require a full, entire Obedience to the King for the time being, do also prove their Legislative Power, that seeing they are Kings in the Eye of the Law, they ought to be so in ours also ; and therefore that the Act of Settlement, so often repeated and confirm'd by Parliament in the late Reigns, ought

ought to be esteem'd as firm as any human Authority could make it.

And I think we have the greatest Reason to aside by this Settlement of the Crown, when we consider that the Person pretending to a better Right to the Government, has been educated in, and now professeth the Romish Religion; a Religion ever intent upon the Ruin of this Church, Religion to which all our Sectaries of *Presbyterians*, *Independants*, *Quakers*, *Anabaptists* were originally owing, and hath been so often stain'd in this Nation, with the Blood of Martyrs and Confessors. And therefore tho' some might flatter themselves, that he whom they would make King may turn Protestant; yet I suppose it will be allow'd, that what may be, may not be, he may not change his Religion, but entail upon this Kingdom a long Succession of Popish Heirs after him; and what then is the Attempt to make him King, but putting our Holy Religion in the greatest Hazard, and venturing it into the Hands of those, that are by Principle the most avowed enemies of it?

But after all, let us remember that all our Danger is not from *Papists*, no, we are surrounded with Enemies on every Side, the whole force of the Dissenters, (tho' they can scarcely agree in any thing else) is united against us, and ready to improve every Opportunity, to reproach the Ministry, to condemn the Doctrines and Discipline of this Church. That our establish'd Church hath withstood many a Storm, and long withstood the Waves of Popery and Fanaticism, is to be indeed remember'd with all Thankfulness, but ought not to make us secure against the Attempts of one, or

or the other, or lay our selves open to those
versaries that appear to be least formidable.

Would we behave our selves as Church of
England Men, every Alarm of Danger ought to
us upon our Guard, to unite us more firmly
gether, and stir us up to a more strict adherence
to the Interest and Doctrine of our Church :
no Jealousies or Fears, no threatening Danger
can justify any unwarrantable Means of our Preser-
vation, or make us forget our Duty to God
and the King. When our Dangers and Distresses
increase upon us, and Fear is on every Side, then
it is that we ought to renew our Repentance, and
humble our selves more and more under the Sentence
of our Sins, and those of this very wicked Na-
tion. Prayers and Tears are all the Arms of pri-
vate Christians, and human Means of Preser-
vation must be left to those higher Powers, who
have the Government over us.

All therefore that we have to do, under
present Fears and Dangers, is, to cry mightily
to God for Mercy; it may be, tho' God has
suffer'd the Sword to enter, he will not bid it
through the Land, it may be soon sheath'd again,
and all our Alarms end in Peace and Quietness.

But it is not the Arm of Flesh, nor the im-
perate Zeal of Parties, that can procure these
estimable Blessings, they must proceed from
God of Peace, reconciled to this sinful Nation
by the Prayers and Intercessions of good Christians.
And I am perswaded, no one will at this Time
be found a better Friend to his Church, his King
and his Country, than the humble Penitent, and
devout Supplicant.

